



Knocking at the College Door

Projections of High School Graduates

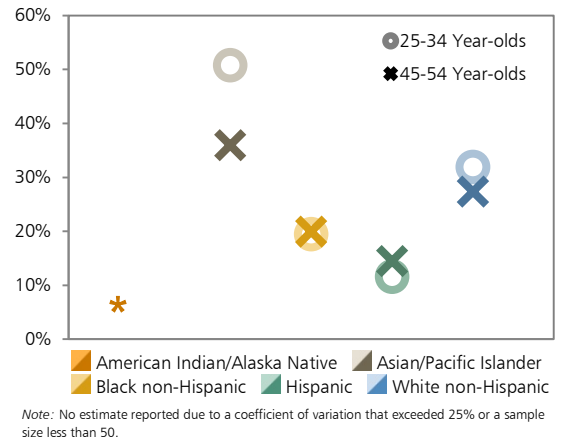
ARKANSAS

National and regional trends mask important variation among states in the supply of high school graduates. This profile provides brief indicators for Arkansas related to: current levels of educational attainment, our projections of high school graduates into the future, and two common barriers to student access and success – insufficient academic preparation and inadequate finances.

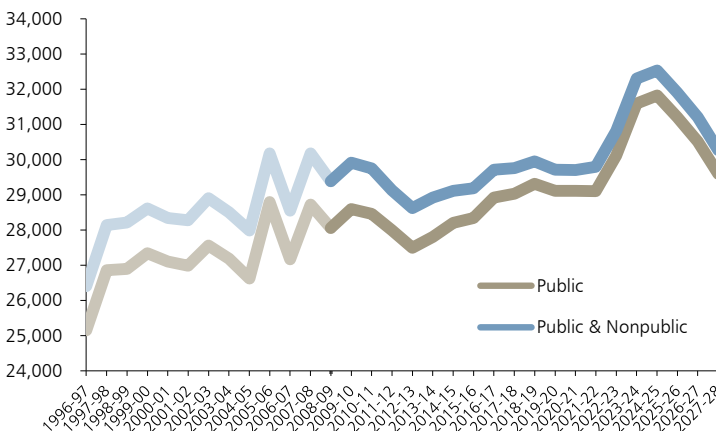
Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity¹

In Arkansas between 2008 and 2010, overall about 28.6% of Arkansas's younger adults (aged 25-34) had at least an associate's degree, slightly more than its older adults (aged 45-54) rate of 25.8%. This data indicates improvement towards increasing education for younger adults who will be in a workforce that increasingly demands higher education levels. However, Arkansas's rates for younger adults remain among the lowest in the nation, and there are substantial gaps in educational attainment along racial/ethnic lines.

- At 31.9%, younger White non-Hispanics' likelihood of holding an associate's degree or higher is better than their older counterparts.
- Estimates are not precise enough for the other races/ethnicities to compare older and younger populations. But it is clear that younger Hispanics, at 11.6%, have the lowest postsecondary degree attainment of all races/ethnicities, followed by Black non-Hispanics at 19.5%. Asians/Pacific Islanders have the highest rates.



Production of High School Graduates



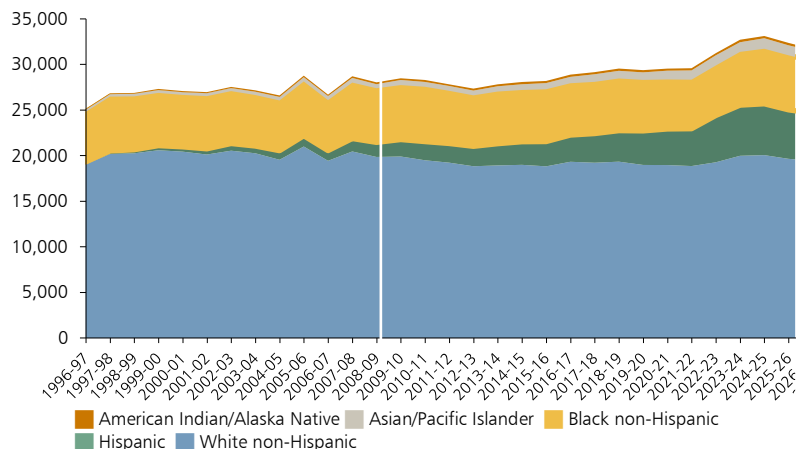
Arkansas has seen its share of volatility in its production of high school graduates in recent years, fluctuating by up to 10% between 2004-05 and 2008-09, with a high of 30,179 in 2007-08.

- Projections suggest it has begun a moderate decline in graduates of about 4% between 2009-10 and 2012-13.
- Steady growth beginning the following year and leading up through 2021-22 adds about 1,300 graduates, before a projected spike culminating in 2024-25 sets a new high point at about 32,500.
- Nonpublic schools have always contributed only a modest number of graduates to the state's overall production. In 2008-09 they accounted for 1,330 graduates, about 4.5% of the total. That level is expected to slip rapidly to about 600 graduates by 2019-20, only about 2% of the total.

Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

Arkansas is among a handful of states that is not projected for steep declines in the number of White non-Hispanic graduates. They are projected for fairly stable numbers, as are Black non-Hispanics. In other respects, Arkansas mirrors national trends, with rapid growth in Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander graduates.

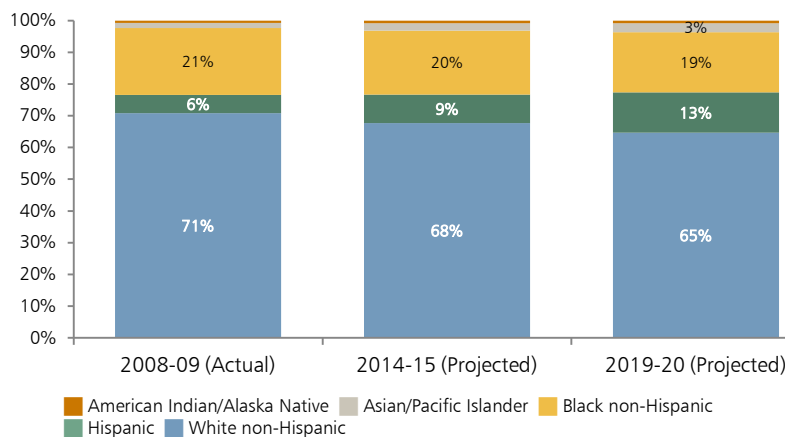
- White non-Hispanic graduates are projected to number just 4% less in 2019-20 than they did in 2008-09.
- Black non-Hispanics' projections follow a similar pattern, down about 6% over the same timeframe.
- Most of the state's growth will come from Hispanics, who are projected to add more than 2,100 graduates by 2019-20 as compared with 2008-09 (134%).
- Asians/Pacific Islanders, though small in number, are also expected to double.



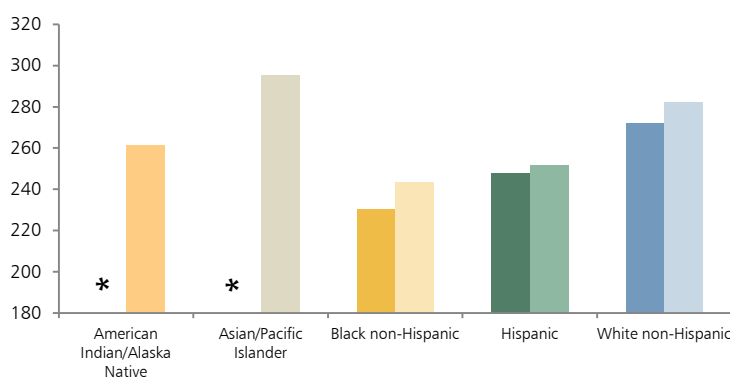
Composition of Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

With only modest decreases projected for the state's two largest races/ethnicities, White non-Hispanic and Black non-Hispanic, changes in the composition of Arkansas's public high school graduating classes are mainly due to large increases in Hispanics.

- Between 2008-09 and 2019-20, the White non-Hispanic share is projected to shrink from 71% to 65%.
- Over the same timeframe, Black non-Hispanics' share will decrease by 2 percentage points to 19%.
- Hispanic shares are likely to more than double, rising from 6% to about 13%.
- Similarly, the share of Asians/Pacific Islanders is projected to rise by a little more than a percentage point to 3%.



Composite Math and Reading Scores by Race/Ethnicity²



Note: Arkansas in darker shades; U.S. in lighter shades. *Reporting standards were not met and no score is available.

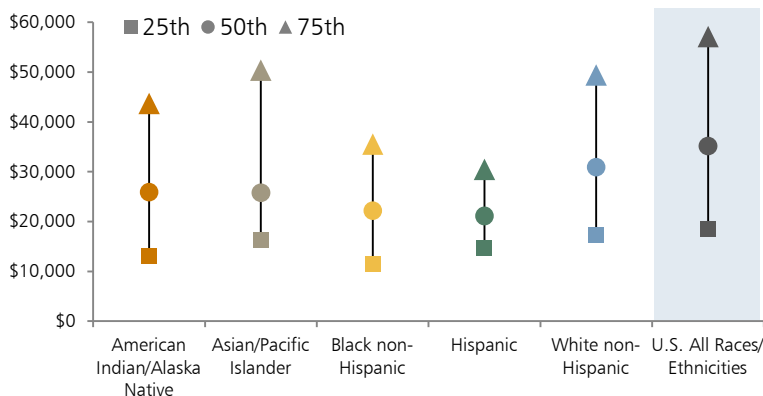
Academic preparation is a major factor in access to and success in college. One indicator of readiness comes from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math and reading scores for twelfth graders in 2009.

- Black non-Hispanics in Arkansas posted the lowest composite score among all races/ethnicities for which state-level data were available, at 230.3.
- The state's White non-Hispanics scored 271.7.
- Both Black non-Hispanics and White non-Hispanics in Arkansas scored lower than the nation as a whole for their groups. (Hispanics' scores were within the margin of error).
- No state-level scores were available for American Indians/Alaska Natives or Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Annual Income by Race/Ethnicity³

A second major barrier is access to the financial resources needed to pay for college. Among working-age adults (25-64) in Arkansas from 2006 to 2010, the statewide median income was \$28,557, compared with \$35,147 for the nation. The median income of White non-Hispanics was \$30,938, still less than the nationwide figure, but well above the amount for all other race/ethnicities in the state.

The income range for a majority of Hispanics was the narrowest of all races, about only \$16,000 for the middle 50%, and a quarter of them earned less than about \$15,000. About a quarter of Black non-Hispanics earned below about \$11,500.



Projections of high school graduates are from WICHE, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, 2012. 1996-97 to 2008-09 are actual reported graduates and 2009-10 to 2027-28 are projections. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems supplied the data used in the first and last figures. State-level estimates for those figures are only reported for a racial/ethnic group when the coefficients of variation for all estimates do not exceed 25% and sample size is 50 or greater. Readers should understand that estimates for small samples can be imprecise due to large standard errors. WICHE provides relevant data tables at <http://wiche.edu/knocking-8th/technicalNotes>.

¹Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-10 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File. Average annual percent of population aged 25-34 and 45-54 with an Associate's degree or higher in 2008-10.

²Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009 and 2011 Mathematics and Reading Assessments, generated using the NAEP Data Explorer. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>. Notes: Composite scores are the average of the Math and Reading scores for 12th graders tested in 2009; Math scores (0 to 300) were converted to fit the Reading scale of 0 to 500.

³Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-10 American Community Survey Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample File. Note: Percentiles for wage/salary income were calculated for persons age 25-64 with positive earnings; unemployed persons with \$0 income were also included. Figures are in 2010 dollars. Native Hawaiians are included in Asian/Pacific Islander.

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Visit <http://wiche.edu/knocking> to obtain the full publication and download these projections as [graphs](#) or [data files](#).